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ABSTRACT

Edward Christopher Williams had a major impact on librarianship, not only as the first documented African American to graduate from a library school, but also as a developer of education for librarians and as an active member of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Ohio Library Association. This study used the historical methodology design to find causal connections of Williams' contributions to librarianship. Research involved the collection, classification and analysis of historical articles, letters, manuscripts, monographs, records, etc., based on primary resources from archival materials at Case Western Reserve University (Ohio) and Howard University (District of Columbia) and on secondary sources from periodicals and books. Williams' contributions to the profession included: (1) an important role in the establishment and development of the library school at Case Western Reserve University, (2) establishment of library training classes, versus a full-fledged library school (for which there was insufficient demand) and extensive collection development at Howard University, (3) great skill as a reference librarian and instructor in library education, (4) advisor to many library institutions, conferences and associations, and (5) aid in planning the first Negro librarian conference at Fisk University (Tennessee) in 1930. Although Williams may be remembered as the first African American to graduate from a library school, it is more important to remember him as a skilled librarian and an inspired educator whose accomplishments improved the institutions and students whom he served. (Contains 14 references.) (MAS)

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EDWARD CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS AND HIS IMPACT ON LIBRARIANSHIP

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Carlos Latimer

May, 1994

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ABSTRACT

Edward Christopher Williams, the first documented African American graduate of a library school, had a major impact on librarianship and library education. In his role as University Librarian at Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and at Howard University in Washington, D. C., he was responsible for the development of important library collections. He also played an important role in the development of the School of Library Science at Western Reserve and of library education at Howard. He also taught classes at both universities. Williams was also active in the American Library Association and the Ohio Library Association. He maintained relationships with other library schools, especially those whose aim was to educate African Americans as librarians. He was also a prolific writer whose works included plays and a novelette.

The historical methodology design was used to find causal connections of Williams' contributions to librarianship. It involved the collection, classification, and analysis of retrospective historical articles, letters, manuscripts, monographs, records, annual reports, and catalogues. This study is based on primary resources from archival material at Case Western Reserve University and Howard University and on secondary sources from periodicals and books about African American librarianship.

Master's Research Paper by

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B.S., Dyke College, 1986

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....iv

Methodology and Literature Review.....vi

"Edward Christopher Williams and
His Impact on Librarianship".....1

Notes.....33

Bibliography.....38

PREFACE

The primary purpose of this study is to research the life and career of Edward Christopher Williams, one of the first important African American librarians. Williams is a seminal figure in the history of librarianship, not only because he was one of the first African American librarians of note, but also because he was influential in the development of education for librarians and was also active in the American Library Association and the Ohio Library Association. He was also prominent in African American intellectual life and was the son-in-law of Charles Chesnutt, the prominent African American novelist.

Williams published only a limited number of articles in the traditional trade or scholarly presses. The resources that were used for this study were found in the archival collections of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Public Library, Howard University Library, and the Western Reserve Historical Society. Several visits were made to the Case Western Reserve University Archives and a two-day visit to the Howard University Archives to examine the relevant materials in these collections. The materials housed at Cleveland Public Library and the Western Reserve Historical Society were limited and only included biographical sketches which were also found at Howard and Case Western Reserve.

This study was hampered by the small number of indexes to periodicals that existed during Williams' career. Those

indexes tended to utilize broad subject headings; care, however, was taken in order to make sure that all relevant references were examined.

The purpose of this study is to prepare a biography of Williams which emphasizes his career as a librarian. This study will investigate and report on the important role that Williams played in the development of library education at Western Reserve University and Howard University and to demonstrate Williams' contributions as a librarian and library administrator.

An exhaustive search of relevant sources such as The National Union Catalog, early issues of Library Literature index, the OCLC database and other computerized databases, revealed that not much was written by or about Williams. An issue of Library Journal announced his death, and the Biographical and Genealogy Master Index provided a reference to a biographical sketch written by E. J. Josey in Dictionary of American Library Biography.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The historical methodology research design was used to find causal connections of Williams' contributions to librarianship. It involved the collection, classification, and analysis of retrospective historical articles, letters, manuscripts, monographs, records, annual reports and catalogues. This study is based on primary and secondary resources.

The primary resources consist of archival material at Case Western Reserve University and at Howard University. The archives at CWRU house a file, under Williams' name, of manuscripts and letters to and from friends and colleagues. These materials highlight his personal interests and include letters of recommendation as well as other correspondence. There is also an archival file of letters and reports to the president of Western Reserve University during the period when Williams was University Librarian there. These papers cover the libraries' budget, personnel, and collection development and maintenance and demonstrate his major contribution to the development of an important library collection. Williams was also one of four members of the committee which established the School of Library Science at Western Reserve University. He also served on the school's faculty and taught a course in reference work. There is an archival file under the heading

"Library Education" at the CWRU Archives. The material is chronologically arranged and not grouped under subheadings; therefore, it took time to examine Williams' exact role and impact on the development of the library education program.

Williams was also responsible for developing a program of library education at Howard University which has gone unnoticed in the history of educating African Americans in librarianship. Through the investigation and the examination of the archival material at Howard University, Williams' role in library education there was determined.

The Archives at Howard housed the Reports of the President of Howard University to the Secretary of the Interior, which reported the status and changes of the Library School, and the Howard University Annual Catalogues which listed and described the courses taught in the program and those taught by Williams. Also found was a manuscript written by C. C. Williamson, Director of Libraries and the School of Library Service, Columbia University, and delivered at the Negro Library Conference at Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 20-23, 1931. The paper reports statements from friends and colleagues about Williams' character and his career.

The secondary literature is a collection of articles from periodicals and books about black librarianship. This material is biographical in scope and does add material of interest about his personal life and career. The articles " Edward Christopher Williams: A Librarian's Librarian," by E. J. Josey, in the Journal of

Library History and "Phylon Profile XIV : Edward Christopher Williams," by Dorothy Porter in Phylon, both provided bibliographies of relevant material. While Williams did not publish much, a series of unsigned articles he wrote for The Messenger, a prominent black magazine in the United States, was found. This series of articles was examined to see whether they relate to librarianship or to Williams' role in African American intellectual life.

EDWARD CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS
AND HIS IMPACT ON LIBRARIANSHIP

Edward Christopher Williams, the first documented African American graduate of a library school,[1] had a major impact on librarianship and library education. In his role as University Librarian at Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and at Howard University in Washington, D. C., he was responsible for the development of important library collections. He also played an important role in the development of the School of Library Science at Western Reserve and of library education at Howard. He also taught classes at both universities. Williams was active in the American Library Association and the Ohio Library Association. He maintained relationships with other library schools, especially those whose aim was to educate African Americans as librarians. He was also a prolific writer whose works included plays and a novelette.

Williams was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on February 11, 1871. His father, Daniel P. Williams of Cleveland, was African American, and his mother, Mary Kilkary, a white woman, was born in Tipperary, County Cork, Ireland. C. C. Williamson, who served long as Director of Libraries and Dean of the School of Library Service at Columbia University, received his undergraduate degree from Western Reserve in 1904, where he became acquainted with Williams. Speaking at the Negro Library Conference in 1931 about Williams, he quoted another friend of Williams about his background: "Some knowledge of his antecedents is necessary to

understand the temperament. His father was born in Winchester, Virginia, and moved to Cleveland where he became a citizen of substance and standing. His mother was born in Tipperary, Cork County, Ireland. Marriage across the color lines was not unusual in Cleveland at that time. Edward Williams was the cross progeny of Colored and Irish parentage and of Baptist and Catholic faiths. Something of the quality of his paternal strain may be judged by the fact that Harry Burleigh, the famous soloist and composer, Harry Williams, the well known singer, and Father Williams, the first colored American to be ordained to the Catholic priesthood, were his blood relatives."[2]

At an early age, Williams was encouraged to excel in school by his parents. He graduated with honors from Central High School in the Cleveland public school system. Williams then enrolled at Adelbert College of Western Reserve University where he was an outstanding student. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year.

Dr. F. A. Waite, a well-known and influential member of the faculty of the Western Reserve Medical School, wrote: "Williams was an excellent student, arising both from real ability and exceedingly hard work. If I were to characterize him I think the first thing I would say as outstanding was his promptness. He was always on time with his work."[3]

Williams was not only an excellent student but also an excellent athlete. He kept himself in good physical condition, and was interested in outdoor sports, especially in track and

baseball. Williams was also very popular among classmates. Fellow students called him friendly, respectful, modest, genial, prompt, and having character. One student wrote: "I think every man in the class liked him."[4]

Williams received his bachelor's degree from Adelbert College in 1892 as the valedictorian of his class. After college he married Ethel Chesnutt, the daughter of the distinguished African American author, Charles Waddell Chesnutt. They named their only son Charles Waddell Chesnutt Williams; he later became a practicing attorney in Washington, D. C., and attempted to publish a biography of his father, but he had an untimely death.[5]

Shortly after his graduation from college in 1892 and his marriage to Ethel Chesnutt, Williams was offered the post of first assistant librarian of Adelbert College at Western Reserve University. He accepted the post and began his career as a librarian. Williams served as librarian of Adelbert and of Western Reserve University from his graduation in 1892 to 1909. From 1892 to 1894 Williams served his apprenticeship years, before he assumed the position of librarian of Adelbert College.

In the library reports for 1893-1894 to the President of the university, the appointment of Williams read: "It having become evident that the present system of library administration was unsatisfactory, and that a librarian must be found who would give his whole time to the work, the faculty has recommended to the trustees the appointment of Mr. Edward Christopher Williams, valedictorian of the class of 1892. It is expected that under

his care the library will be made more useful to the college."[6]

As librarian at Western Reserve University, Williams more than doubled the size of the collection, moved the collection into a new library building, and, within ten years, had obtained through gifts and donations, a collection that outgrew it. For the 1894-1895 academic year, 26,000 bound volumes, and 12,000 unbound books and pamphlets were part of the library. Several valuable periodicals relating to classical philology and archaeology were also added to the library. The entire collection was to be classified according to the Dewey system.[7]

For the 1895-1896 academic year, the library contained about 30,000 bound volumes and 10,000 unbound books and pamphlets. The library contained many complete sets of valuable publications in classical philology and archaeology, Germanic and general philology, history, anthropology, science, and complete sets of the oldest and best literary magazines. Under the modified Dewey system the entire collection was classified. The daily library hours also increased from five hours of service to students up to seven and a quarter hours.[8]

Also during those years, funds for a new library building had been given to the college by H. R. Hatch of Cleveland. The building was in the process of erection and was to be ready for occupancy in 1896. For the academic year 1896-1897, Williams supervised the moving from small quarters in the Administration Building to the new building. His joy and happiness may be shared from his report which states: "The year 1896-97 is a

memorable one, as far as library interests are concerned. It has witnessed the removal of the books from their old and narrow quarters in the Main building of Adelbert College, to their new and commodious abode in the Hatch Library. The library takes on a new life, becoming in some degree a center of university life. This new structure will increase the number of library users and the use of reference books."[9]

The Adelbert College Library changed its name to the Hatch Library in 1897, and contained about 30,000 bound volumes and 10,000 unbounded books and pamphlets. The collection included strong holdings in German language and literature, French literature, United States history, and the history of the French Revolution. The library also increased to ten hours a day service to the university.[10]

The new building, built under Williams' direction, made an impression on a student who said: "What I do recall very clearly is the new building, the attractive and well lighted reading room, and, most clearly of all, the open shelves well filled with books which I was free to read without getting anyone's permission."[11]

For the academic year 1897-1898, the library continued to grow and contained about 35,000 bound volumes and 10,000 books and pamphlets. The academic year 1898-1899 brought a promotion to Williams, for he was elevated from the librarian of Adelbert College to University Librarian. The collection contained 42,000 volumes at the time of Williams' promotion.[12]

During the academic year 1899-1900, Williams took a leave of absence from Western Reserve and attended the New York State Library School where he completed nearly all of the two-year courses in one year. During Williams' absence from the university, the collection showed little growth.[13]

As the university librarian, Williams reported for the academic year 1900-1901 that the collection had 43,171 volumes. He also stated that the library was open in the evenings for the first time. Also for the first time in the history of the library, subject cards were written for all books. Williams also reported the need for more shelving in the reference room and the need for money for the binding of books.[14]

For the academic year 1901-1902, the total number of volumes reported was 45,354. Williams also reported that evening hours would not continue because of financial reasons. The change resulted in considerable savings of heat, light, and service of supervision. For that year Williams also reported that the department was without money, and that library wants were many.[15]

For the academic year 1902-1903, the collection had 46,893 volumes. Williams reported that the President of the university had made efforts to obtain funds for the purchase of books for the library. Williams also reported his pleasure in receiving from Henry Adams of Washington, D. C., the well-known historian and essayist, a gift of more than 200 volumes relating to American history. This was one of the major gifts to Western Reserve University's library.[16]

For the academic year 1903-1904, the library collection contained 48,538 volumes. Williams reported that money available for the purchase of books and supplies surpassed the previous year.[17] This was also the same year the Library School opened. For the academic year 1904-1905, the library contained about 50,000 bound volumes[18] and for 1905-1906, it contained about 52,000 bound volumes and 10,000 unbound books and pamphlets.[19] For the academic year 1906-1907, the library had 54,000 bound volumes.

For the academic year 1907-1908 the library had 54,503 bound volumes. Williams announced that the number of additions to the library and particularly the number of volumes acquired by purchase had fallen below average that year. The reasons he listed were that two or three departments had been holding their appropriations for later and more advantageous expenditures and that Cleveland offered poor facilities for library binding.[20]

For the academic year 1908-1909, the library had 63,534 bound volumes. Williams reported the needs of the library remained the same as in previous years: namely, a regular and increased income for the purchase of books and periodicals, and for binding; additional help in the work of the library; and more room for the storage of books and for seminar work. Williams also reported the library's sense of loss sustained in the death of a friend and benefactor, Mrs. Samuel Mather, a major contributor to the university library.[21] This happened to be the last report of Williams' tenure at Western Reserve University.

When Williams assumed the post of librarian, the collection had numbered less than 25,000 volumes. He had built the collection to about 65,000 volumes when he left the post in 1909.

In August 1909, Williams resigned his position of University Librarian and Instructor in the Library School to become Principal of M Street High School in Washington, D. C. George F. Strong, the librarian who replaced Williams, reported: "During these years the Library was built up from a collection of 26,000 volumes to its present size. In the short time I have served as librarian, I have come to know that the importance and usefulness of our collection, unusual in proportion to its size, are largely due to Mr. Williams' wide and thorough knowledge of books, the pains which he took to advance the interests of the library, and his active helpfulness to the faculty and students of the college."[22]

C. C. Williamson wrote: "His service as a librarian was of high order. Knowing his work in principle and detail, devoted to it, courteous, helpful to each and to all, cooperative with his staff, and his staff cooperative with him, he was an officer at once efficient and beloved."[23]

On Williams' resignation, William Howard Brett, the Dean of the Western Reserve Library School and the Director of Cleveland Public Library, especially felt his loss: "The resignation of Mr. Williams as librarian of Hatch Library took from the library school one of it ablest instructors and best friends." Brett also mentioned that no one knew why Williams left his successful

position at Western Reserve University.[24]

The reason for Williams' resignation remains unclear, but the issue of his wife's unhappiness is often given. C. H. Cramer, who wrote a history of the Western Reserve University School of Library Science, wrote to the prominent librarian Carl Vitz on this subject. Vitz received his degree in library science in 1905 from Western Reserve, where he became a friend of Williams. Vitz was later Vice-Librarian at Cleveland Public Library and subsequently Head Librarian at Toledo and Minneapolis. Cramer wrote of Vitz: "He says that he knew Williams well, occasionally walked in Wade Park and the University neighborhood with him, had high regard for him. According to Vitz, Williams did not reveal much about himself..." Then quoting Vitz directly, Cramer wrote: "He did however, at one time reveal, sadly rather than bitterly, that while his relationship with the men of the school were friendly, that the wives of the faculty would not recognize his wife....It was this fact that led him, I believe, to consider possibilities elsewhere."[25]

Edward C. Williams played an important role in the establishment and the development of the library school at Western Reserve University. Initially, William Howard Brett, director of Cleveland Public Library, contemplated the establishment of a library school at Western Reserve University, with academic instruction from professors and technical instruction by staff members of the Cleveland Public Library.

University President Charles F. Thwing was receptive to the idea of a library school, and in 1901 he appointed a committee to study the matter. On the committee were Linda Eastman, who was then Vice-Librarian at Cleveland Public Library, Williams, who was then University Librarian, and Allen Dudley Severance, who was professor of Church History at Adelbert College.[26]

The committee recommended the establishment of a library school and a building on Adelbert Road to house it. The committee also reported that the cost would be nearly $8,000: $4,500 for the building and $3,000 for two full-time instructors. It turned out that the committee underestimated by a wide margin the amount necessary to establish and operate the school. Nonetheless, the university trustees endorsed the recommendations of the committee and delegated the task of securing necessary funds.[27] The establishment of the Library School at WRU was finally made possible by the generous gift in February, 1903 of $100,000 from Andrew Carnegie to form an endowment fund.

Salome Cutler Fairchild, the distinguished library educator and head of the State Library of New York, in a letter addressed to Brett and Williams on February 26, 1903, wrote: "Allow me to congratulate you on the wonderful gift from Mr. Carnegie for a Library School at Adelbert. It pleases me very much because the location fits the necessities of a highly successful library school. Such a school, it seems to me, must be in connection with a university of good standing and co-educational. It must be in a city provided with a fine library system with branches,

children's work, a librarian who has an ideal of public library work, not a mere administrator. The climate of Cleveland is favorable. All those who have thought much on the problem of library instruction will, I am sure, consider that Mr. Carnegie has shown good judgment and foresight in giving his money to Western Reserve University."[28]

This letter is evidence of Williams' contribution to the development of the library school at Western Reserve University because he was acknowledged by Fairchild, an important library educator, as a co-worker with Brett.

The purpose of the library school was to give a thorough course in training for library work. "While, as is eminently proper in a school so established and endowed, special attention will be given to training for work in our rapidly developing system of public libraries, the interests of the college endowed, and other libraries will not be neglected."[29]

The first year of the library school, Williams was listed as the instructor for "Trade and National Bibliography," "Order Department," and "Reference Work." The "Order Department" course was the only course taught that year. It included "instruction and practice in the use of trade bibliography, the technical routine and the records necessary for intelligent and systematic conduct of book-buying in public and college libraries. Special attention will be given to editions and their relative merits."[30]

For the 1903-1904 school year, Williams taught the "Trade and National Bibliography" course and "Reference Work." "Trade

and National Bibliography" was a study of the trade and national bibliographies of the United States, England, France, and Germany, with a hasty survey of other European countries. Special attention was given to the United States and England, and to bibliography of government publications. Familiarity with the works studied was introduced by practical problems. Special topics were treated also, such as the scope and utility of bibliography, bibliographical abbreviations, and the limitations of trade bibliography. The aim of this course was to give the students a practical knowledge of the trade books which were useful in the work of the order department, and at the same time to furnish a basis for the advanced work of the second year.[31]

The "Reference Work" course was "a study of the standard works of reference, as the general and special encyclopedias, dictionaries, annuals, indexes to periodicals, ready reference manuals of every kind, and the more important newspapers and periodicals. Works of a similar scope will be compared, and the limitations of each pointed out. Lists of questions to be solved by the use of the works studied will be given, and the methods of finding the answers discussed in class. The aim of this course is not only to promote familiarity with a fairly large number of well known reference works, but also to give the student some idea of method in the handling of books, to familiarize him with the use of indexes, tables of contents, and varying forms of arrangement, and finally, to suggest some methods of comparison and evaluation."[32]

In 1904-1905 and in 1905-1906, Williams not only taught "Reference Work" and "Trade and National Bibliography," but he also taught "Advanced Reference Work and Bibliography." This course, "while based upon courses 1 and 2 in reference work and bibliography, differs radically from these in scope and methods. It is designed to acquaint the students with the bibliography resources of many important subjects, and as far as possible to bring him into actual contact with the important indexes, bibliographies, repertories, collections, society publications, periodicals, and source books of various kinds. Emphasis will be laid upon the subjects regarded as most important from the standpoint of the American Library."[33]

In 1906-1907, Williams continued to teach "Reference Work" and "Bibliography" but also taught "Elementary Bibliography," "Public Documents" and "Selection of Books." "The Elementary Bibliography" course "will treat of elementary bibliography and will introduce students to bibliographies of bibliography, library catalogues under their bibliographical aspect, encyclopedias bibliographically considered, selected lists of best books, and national bibliographies both retrospective and current."[34]

The "Public Documents" course was "a brief survey of the publications of the government, chiefly from the standpoint of reference work and bibliography." The "Selection of Books" course was "a weekly reading seminar, attempting a hasty survey of the literature of certain important subjects, the study of

well-known types and notable examples in the book world, the study of book reviews, the evaluation of books with relation to the various types and grades of readers, and the writing of book annotations."[35]

Williams continued to teach those courses until his resignation. Herbert S. Hirshberg, who later became dean of the library school and director of libraries at Western Reserve, took over the courses Williams taught for the school year 1909-1910.

Statements of evidence of Williams' skill as a teacher come from former colleagues and students. A faculty member of the Western Reserve Library School, quoted by Williamson, wrote: "I wish to mention most strongly the contributions, which it seems to me, he made to all his students. He had real culture, the easy seemingly unforced kind which we do not find encouraged by our present hurried life. He drew upon this reserve in his intellectual background in such a way as to make students feel the dignity and importance of similar accomplishments if they could attain it."[36]

A public librarian and former student quoted by Williamson wrote: "Mr. Williams was an admirable teacher of reference work. He knew reference books thoroughly and how to interest students in their study. Reference service was a living thing to him, and he vitalized the books by connecting them with human interests and needs."[37]

Another former student quoted by Williamson said, "No class that Mr. Williams taught was ever dull to his students, for he

was always interested in the subject he was teaching that the time spent in the classroom seemed to go all too quickly for both teacher and pupils."[38]

And another one of Williams' students quoted by Williamson said: "Mr. Williams was a very decided inspiration on the faculty of the Library School. The students always expressed great admiration and respect for him and found his classes a source of real inspiration. As I remember, the first class dedicated their Annual to him as guide, philosopher, and friend. I have a vivid recollection of him as a thoroughly wide awake and interesting personality, from whom one always caught some fire of inspiration."[39]

In 1909 Williams went to Washington, D. C., to be the principal of the M Street School, which later changed its name to the Dunbar High School. The Dunbar High School of Washington, D. C., the pride of the African American community for many years, was organized in November 1870 as the preparatory high school for African American youths. It was the only opportunity for preparation for leadership among African American people of the nation's capital. The faculty was dedicated to training and inspiring youths, often contributing money and social uplift as the need arose during their daily contacts with students. Federal standards provided equal salaries for teachers and administrators, regardless of sex or race, and attracted to Washington, D. C., the best African American trained college graduates from Northern and Western colleges throughout the

United States.[40]

The objectives of the Dunbar High School were "to provide for progressive intellectual development; develop interests, appreciations, knowledge and skills that enrich and beautify life, to develop attitudes that will result in good health habits; to provide situations that will encourage the development of desirable character and personality traits; and to provide opportunities for the development of attitudes and habits of good citizenship, in terms of honest respect for all human personality."[41]

The objectives of the Dunbar High School were very similar to the characteristics of Williams' life. During Williams' school days a fellow student said, "I knew Edward C. Williams as a fellow student in college and preparatory school. He was an outstanding member of my class on account of his achievements in scholarship and on the athletic field. He bore his honors in a very modest and unassuming manner and was well liked by all members of the student body. He had a very friendly nature, perhaps a little retiring, but a nice sense of humor and gentle manners. He might well be an inspiring example to his fellows."[42]

When Williams received his appointment as principal at Dunbar, President Charles F. Thwing of Western Reserve University wrote in a letter to the Board of Education in Washington, D. C.: "In particular as a reference librarian, I believe him to be the best man in Cleveland and among the best of any librarians. As a

teacher he is apt, forcible, impressive, successful. He's not only competent from every viewpoint, but energetic and thoroughly up-to-date in all that is necessary to make the work at M Street High School, Washington, D. C., under his leadership prosper as never before."[43]

Roscoe Conkling Bruce, who at the time was the Assistant Superintendent in charge of the Colored Public Schools in Washington, commented in his official report for 1915-1916 school year on Williams' career at Dunbar. He stated that the new principal came to a school in which, so the Board of Education felt, "the faculty had been rent asunder by miscellaneous but insistent dissension. A high minded man, Williams could be the rod of no faction, of no personage; he proved himself to be the able and disinterested servant of the institution. His colleagues soon realized that here they had a laborious, enlightened, self-sacrificing man. He sought to be absolutely just to every teacher, to every pupil. Every personal consideration he sank in devotion to the school. He sought to unify the faculty upon a basis of high professional endeavor. And the faculty responded finely to his example and spirit. Never did Williams seek, never did he seem to care for, mere popularity. But the thoughtful and substantial elements of this difficult community of ours eventually came to know and value the man. It is a fact that Mr. Williams brought to the school the highest order of scholarship, the richest and most varied possessed by any principal in the history of M Street and Dunbar

High School."[44]

Reports of the District of Columbia of Education give ample evidence of Williams' success as a principal. Years later at Dunbar School, Mary Gibson Hundley, Chairman of the College Bureau, commented on Williams' contribution to Dunbar. She wrote, "We need college preparatory classes for intensive work, as we had during the administration of the late E. C. Williams. If we fail to develop our potential leaders to the utmost, we are betraying the students in the community."[45]

In 1916 Williams received a call from Howard University to become the University Librarian after completing his task at Dunbar High School. Professor Kelly Miller said, "Mr. Williams took up his duties as principal of the Dunbar High School at a trying transitional period. Positions had to be composed; old sores were to be healed; the most important secondary school within the race had to be adjusted to the requirements of advancing educational standards. All of these were accomplished with a degree of success that gave satisfaction to all concerned. He found a pile of books and left it a well ordered library. This task accomplished, he received a call from Howard University to resume work in the library field which he laid down for the field of educational administration."[46]

Upon hearing news of Williams' coming back into librarianship, another colleague was quoted as saying, "It was good news, indeed, that E. C. Williams was coming back into library service on a one hundred percent basis. Nothing better

could have happened at this critical juncture in the development of library facilities and training for professional service in Negro institutions."[47]

Williams was one of the important persons appointed to Howard University in 1916 by the teachers committee.[48] Under Howard University President Newman, the teachers committee played a more important role in administrative functions. On July 12, 1912, the executive committee appointed a new committee of three persons including President Newman to confer with the teachers committee on appointments of teachers and increase in their salaries. They invited Edward C. Williams to join the faculty, but he declined the offer to come to Howard, and no reason was given. But on June 6, 1916, the finance committee appointed Williams as Director of the Library School at an annual salary of $1,760. This salary was more than that received by other deans and equal to that received by the top administrators at Howard.[49] In accordance with a vote of the Howard University trustees, instruction in library work for the library school had begun in September 1912. Two students were enrolled in the program although one of them was enrolled for credit for only part of the year. The requirement for admission to this school was a regular high school course. It was thought that library school work would provide opportunities for service for a number of young people.[50] For the school year 1914 two students applied for admission to the library school. The two students could not take the necessary work while pursuing the studies of the teachers

college. Four students applied for admission for the next session. The requirements for admission changed slightly to the completion of a "regular and acceptable" high school course.[51] For the fiscal year ended June 30, 1915, several students applied for work in the library school, but found it impossible to take courses because of the requirements that a full program be carried. For that reason no students were registered.[52] For the fiscal year ended June 30, 1916, no student was enrolled in the library school. The president's report stated: "Those who wished to take partial work in this school could not do so without overburdening themselves and thus endangering their other academic course. We are sure that this school will be needed when students realize that library work is a profession of high character and offers opportunities for service of great benefit to the people."[53]

From evidence of the early history of the library school at Howard University, it is apparent that there was little interest among the students to train in librarianship and to pursue the library school curriculum. The few students who did enroll or attempted to enroll were part of the Teachers College.

Edward C. Williams departed as principal of the Dunbar High School to become the Dean of the Library School, Professor of Bibliography, and the Director of the Library Training Class in 1916. The news release reported: "The university has brought much credit to herself by securing Professor E. C. Williams as the Dean of the Library School. Professor Williams has had years

of experience in library work. The university will be greatly benefited by his service and will have an 'up-to-date' Library School."[54]

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 1917, the university reported: "We placed in charge of our library a highly trained librarian, who has had an adequate experience as a teacher in a Library School elsewhere. He has begun to lay the foundation for an adequate library training by giving the last year a series of lectures to such students as could attend upon the handling and use of reference books. This is a matter in which most college students are deficient. There is a need of a larger staff before full courses can be carried on."[55]

After having evaluated the conditions of the Library School and the university, Williams turned down the idea, on sound professional reasoning, that continuing a library school was feasible at Howard. His reasons were that the university lacked the room, books, equipment and the teaching forces for a library school, such as would meet even partially the requirements laid down by the American Library Association.[56] Williams also felt that the establishment of a library training class or apprentice class would better be suited for the university.[57]

The president of the university accepted Williams' judgment, and instead of operating a second-rate library school at Howard, Williams offered practical courses to his staff and untrained persons from the public in library training classes. The elementary course in library economy was given in response to a

very insistent demand from the city of Washington, D. C., following the proposed opening of branches of the public library in the public school building, and subsequent need for branch libraries.[58] Although a decision had been made to not have a library school per se, the school did continue to operate.

Under the direction of Williams, the Library School was placed under the department of general services for the year 1919. Because of the effects of the war, no regular instruction was given. The School of General Services comprised the Department of Library Science and the Department of Physical Education, including courses in military training with the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.[59]

The requirements for admission were the same as the regular admission requirements of the university. Work in Library Science satisfactorily done elsewhere was accepted to meet the university requirements. For other students in the School of General Services, the library science course was elective.[60]

The changes in the Library School under the direction of Williams coincided with somewhat limited demands, particularly from the South, for opportunities for library training. The Library Training class offered instruction in library science which was designed to meet the standards set by the American Library Association. The university accepted a limited number of students as members of a training class which received full class instruction in six classes. The classes were "Reference Work," "Bibliography," " Public Documents," "Criticism and Selection of

Books," "Practical Work," and "Technical and Administrative."[61]

The "Reference Work" class was a study of standard works of reference, general and special encyclopedias, dictionaries, annuals, indexes to periodicals, ready reference manuals, and the most important newspapers, periodicals, and public documents. "Bibliography" was a study of the trade and national bibliography of the United States and England, with a hasty survey of France, Germany, and other European countries. The "Public Documents" course was a brief survey of the publications of the government, chiefly from the standpoint of reference work and bibliography as well as the value of government publications to the small library with a limited income. "Criticism and Selection of Books" was a weekly reading seminar which "attempted a hasty survey of the literature of certain important subjects; a study of well known types in the book world; the evaluation of books with relation to certain types and grades of readers; the writing of book annotations, and the study of book reviews." "Practical Work" allowed for actual work with readers in the Howard University Library. The experiences were discussed freely during class periods in an attempt to make the work of each student contribute to the knowledge of all the rest. For the "Technical and Administrative" course no description was given. Students were encouraged to take advantage of the courses in German, French, Italian, and Spanish offered by the other departments.[62] The language courses were strongly recommended because Williams was a talented linguist, and at Howard and Western Reserve he taught

courses in German, French, and Italian.

The 1922 report to the president of the university stated: "Classes in Library Science were conducted by the Librarian of the University in connection with the evening classes in the spring and autumn quarters of 1922. No courses will be offered in the school year 1923-1924." That was the last year of the Library School's existence.[63]

As the Howard University Librarian, Williams immediately saw the need for a new building, more extensive equipment, a better library, and a larger teaching force. Williams also believed that most college students were deficient in using reference books; he therefore, began a series of lectures on the handling and use of reference books. Williams also trained his own library staff by giving courses in library work, thereby helping to meet the need for trained librarians.

Williams stressed the fact that the book collection was far below the proper standard of a university the size of Howard University, particularly in view of the varied academic, professional, and technical courses offered in the catalog. It was collection development which Williams stressed when he was installed as University Librarian. He wrote: "Books, books, and still more books, have been, and are, as these words are written, the great outstanding need, and nothing will serve as a substitute for them."[64]

Through the Laura Spelman Fund, several thousand dollars' worth of books were purchased in the fields of anthropology,

economics, psychology, political science, and business. Many new subscriptions to periodicals were added. At that time Williams wrote: "The demands upon the university library are now greater than the present building can adequately accommodate. The need of a new building is manifest."[65]

In a report Williams also wrote: "The most pressing need of Howard University at the present is a new library building. This building should have a main reading room capacity of 400 readers; a bookstack capacity of 200,000 volumes; and should contain offices, workrooms, seminar rooms, a special room for our collection of Negro-Americana, a newspaper and periodical room, a museum and art gallery, and a small auditorium equipped as a little theater. Estimated cost $400,000 to 500,000." Williams justified his report by also writing: "Our present structure is about what one would expect to find in a college of 300 to 400 students under the conditions existing a generation ago."[66]

During Williams' tenure at Howard, the collection increased from roughly 30,000 to 47,000 volumes. Mrs. Emma G. Murray, the acting librarian after Williams' death, commented on Williams' impact at Howard: "His relations with the members of the faculty and students as librarian and teacher were friendly and inspiring. He was ever a willing consultant, having a wealth of information to give and taking delight in being of service to all who called upon him. He was kind, courteous, tactful in all things and considerate of the rights of others. He leaves a

memory which members of the faculty and students of Howard University and librarians over the country will ever cherish."[67]

Edward Christopher Williams was active in professional organizations associated with librarianship and maintained a relationship with other schools. Williams' professional involvement included the Ohio Library Association, the New York State Library School Association, and the American Library Association.

Ohio Library Association Handbook 1902-1905 lists Williams as an active member during that time period. He was a charter member of the Ohio Library Association, and he was also the chairman of the committee that drafted the constitution of that organization. In 1901-1902 he served as the secretary of the Association and chairman of the college section.

In 1905, Williams participated in the Ohio Library Association's Committee on Library Training in Cleveland. Through the co-operation of the Dean and faculty of the Western Reserve University Library School, the Committee on Library Training formed a library institute to be held in connection with the annual meeting of the association. The sessions followed immediately upon the close of the meetings. The library institute committee was to give lectures, illustrations of practical work, and round table discussions. The subjects of bookbinding and repair, reference work, cataloging, library records, and working with children were discussed. Williams' role in the library institute was to give instruction in

reference work.[68]

Williams was a faithful member of and had great respect for the American Library Association. He spoke very highly of the value of ALA accreditation for a library school. Williams gave a talk, "Library Needs of Negro Institutions," at the College and Reference section of ALA on May 30, 1928.[69] Although when he appeared on the program at this conference, few of those present seemed to know who he was, his address was received with interest and enthusiasm, both for the man and the message.[70]

In Williams' position of being one of the best educated librarians of his day, he was called upon to advise on library institutions, conferences, and associations outside of Ohio. In 1904 he served as the Second Vice President of the New York State Library Association. And after the library school at Hampton Institute was established, he made an annual visit to the school and lectured to classes in which he sought to positively inspire the students for service in the library field. Miss Florence R. Curtis, at the time the Director of the Library School, wrote: "Mr. Williams' interest in the Hampton Institute Library School was cordial. He kept in close touch with it and gave generously of his time and interest, coming each year to lecture to the class, and doing everything in his power to make the annual inspection trip to Washington a worthwhile memory to the student. To them he was a great inspiration to genuine scholarship. His personality was a vital one. He impressed one with his unaffected friendliness and good will, and with his cheerful and

courageous attitude toward life."[71] Williams' annual pilgrimage to the old Hampton Institute Library was not only to lecture, but he would also use the occasion to urge African American library school students to excel in their studies and to join the ranks of the American Library Association.

Williams also maintained a relationship with Fisk University Libraries. He was quoted as saying, "The best developed libraries in Negro institutions are those of Howard University and Hampton Institute." He mentioned Fisk University as "a place where the library problem is being given some attention and where great progress might be expected in the near future."[72]

Williams also participated in the planning of a "Negro librarian conference" at Fisk University. Dr. Louis Shores reported: "When I decided to plan the first Negro librarians conference at Fisk in 1930, Mr. Williams helped me plan it, and was, of course, scheduled to be one of the keynote speakers, but his untimely death, sorrowfully changed our plans."[73]

For several summers, Williams spent his summer vacations working at the 135th Street Branch of New York Public Library. The branch was known for promoting reading as a wholesome cultural and leisure-time activity and for providing the community with story hours, free public lectures by outstanding men and women, exhibits of black artists and sculptors, and a reference collection on black literature. This branch was later an important institution to the community during the Harlem Renaissance.

Williams not only demonstrated his writing skills in the Western Reserve University and Howard University annual reports, but he also wrote plays, a novelette, a sketch of the Library of Adelbert College of Western Reserve University, an unpublished survey of the Howard University library, and an essay, "The Value of the Study of Biography."

"A Sketch of the History and Present Condition of the Library of Adelbert College" examines the Library from 1831 up to 1883. Taken from the annual catalogues of Western Reserve University, Williams wrote about the budget, collection, library regulations, gifts, and the library staff. From this sketch of its history, Williams brought attention to the needs of the Western Reserve University Library.

Williams wrote plays during his early years at Howard University as an effort to develop among students an interest in folklore and history. "The Exile" is an Italian classical drama centered around the intense political rival of the Salviati and Medici families for the control of the government of Florence, Italy, in the fifteenth century. This play was performed by the Howard University Players. Williams wrote two other unpublished plays, "The Sheriffs Children," adapted from a short story written by his father-in-law Charles Waddell Chesnutt, and "The Chasm," a play written with Willis Richardson.[74]

The novelette, "Letters to Davy Carr, A True Story of Colored Vanity Fair," was a series published in The Messenger from January 1925 to June 1926. This series of stories depicted

the African American sophisticated society in Washington, D. C.

Williams' article, "The Study of Biography," was published in The School Teacher. One paragraph of that essay has been quoted by E. J. Josey: "The one factor which stands out clearly and distinctly in all the careers in which success is written large is will, will --indomitable, unshakable, unconquerable will. Such a will overrides all human limitations and weaknesses, and not time, nor place, nor birth, nor breeding, nor poverty, nor ignorance, nor sickness, nor disease can conquer or subdue it. It has but one master - the master of us all, and that is death - death the merciless, the inevitable!"[75]

Williams also published poems and stories anonymously. It is very probable that the signature "Bertuccio" used by the author of an article published in The Messenger was his pseudonym.[76]

In 1929, Williams was awarded a fellowship for advanced study from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. He enrolled in September in the School of Library Service of Columbia University to work toward a doctorate. Illness throughout the fall, however, forced him to return to Washington in early December. His illness was more serious than had been realized, and on December 24, 1929, Williams died. His untimely death, however, did not bring to an abrupt end the accomplishments of his career, for he had laid the foundations for the progress of institutions with which he had been associated.

Williams' work as University Librarian at two important educational institutions had set both their libraries on roads to

improvement and progress. At both Western Reserve and Howard he had been responsible for the construction of new buildings and the moving of the collections to new quarters. In both institutions he had stressed collection development so that after his tenure in both places, the collections were greatly increased in size and quality.

As an educator, Williams had success and influence not only in education for librarianship but also in secondary school education. His solution of the problems which had faced the Dunbar School ensured its continuance as a school for educating young African Americans to become leaders of their race. There too he insisted on a good library, where, it is said, "He found a pile of books and left a well ordered library." As a library educator, he was one of the key figures in the establishment of the School of Library Science at Western Reserve and served as an influential and popular instructor there for many years. His subsequent role in library education at Howard University was a pioneering effort in the training of African Americans for librarianship. He continued that commitment after the demise of the Howard program by serving on the visiting committee at Hampton Institute.

It is as a writer that Williams is least remembered, but this is an area that might offer opportunity for research, with an examination of the styles and themes of his novelette and plays, as well as an examination of his essay, "The Nature of Biography."

Finally, although there is no conclusive evidence as to why Williams left his position as University Librarian at Western Reserve University, it is clear that the moves to become principal of the Dunbar School and later University Librarian at Howard were ones of commitment to African American institutions. This role was acknowledged by C. C. Williamson at the Negro Library Conference in 1931 when he said, "On an occasion of this kind it is most fitting for us to pay tribute to the name of Edward Christopher Williams, whose life and service should for many years to come be an inspiration to all who are interested in higher education and especially in library service for the Negro race."[77] And although Williams may be remembered as the first African American librarian to complete an academic program in the field, it is more important to remember him as a skilled librarian and an inspired educator whose accomplishments improved the institutions and students whom he served. In a lengthy obituary in Library Journal, Williams was described as follows: "As a librarian he was broad-visioned and efficient, and as a teacher highly successful and stimulating.... [his death] means the loss of one whose contributions to librarianship, although quietly made, were far-reaching and vital."[78]

NOTES

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